



# HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT USER GUIDE

Information Bulletin No. 27

The Pacific Grove Historic Context Statement (HCS), approved by the City Council on October 19, 2011, identifies development patterns and significant property types within the city. It is intended to be used as a tool to better understand and evaluate the city's historic resources.

The HCS is organized as follows:

- **Section I. Introduction** provides basic project information and outlines research methodology.
- **Section II. Previous Surveys, Studies and Reports** summarizes previous historic resource survey work in Pacific Grove.
- **Section III. Guidelines for Evaluation** provides an overview of the various national, state, and local registration requirements; a summary of significant themes; a definition of each of the major property types found in the city ; and guidelines for evaluating the significance and integrity of these properties.
- **Section IV. Historic Context** includes a narrative of the area's developmental history. This history is broken into six periods that are defined by events, themes, and development trends. Property types associated with each of the six periods are identified and analyzed. The information in this section does not provide any determinations of eligibility, but rather can be used as a reference point when questions arise regarding a property's significance and integrity.

Under separate cover is a document entitled "**Pacific Grove Preservation Program Considerations**," which includes a discussion of potential research topics, survey efforts, designation priorities, and other preservation strategies that the City could undertake, if desired. These recommendations are intended to help prioritize future historic preservation related efforts, and are suggested as "next steps" for the City to consider.

The City of Pacific Grove has already taken several critical steps to protect its historic resources, including the adoption of a Historic Preservation Ordinance (PGMC §[23.76](#)), the creation of a Historic Resources Inventory (HRI), the establishment of a Historic Resources Committee (HRC), and the inclusion of historic preservation goals in the City's General Plan (See Section II of the Historic Context Statement for a complete overview of Pacific Grove's existing historic preservation program). The Pacific Grove HCS is designed to work with these existing plans and policies to improve the evaluation of the city's potential historic resources.

The Pacific Grove HCS does not replace the City's current Historic Assessment (HA) process, which is required in order to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Instead, the Pacific Grove HCS provides useful information to aid in the preparation of Phase I HAs by qualified consultants, potentially reducing the time and cost involved. Using the HCS as a foundation for Phase I HA will help to strengthen and accredit the HRI, which currently includes approximately 1,300 buildings. The HCS will also be very helpful to the HRC when reviewing Initial Historic Screenings, and should be used as a reference point when questions arise concerning the significance or integrity of individual properties. On the following page is a flow chart illustrating how the HCS might be used to help evaluate the potential historic significance of a building.

# HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT: PROPERTY EVALUATION CASE STUDY



SUBJECT PROPERTY (1925)

1. During which period of development was this property constructed?

## TABLE OF CONTENTS Pages i-iv:

Use Table of Contents to decide which period of significance is applicable to the subject property, based on construction date.

In this case, turn to the chapter "Pacific Grove Comes of Age" (1903-1926).

2. What are the significant themes from this period?

## CHAPTER IV: Pacific Grove Comes of Age pages 115-119:

Use the summary at the beginning of the chapter to understand the significant forces shaping development during this time, as well as where construction occurred.

3. What property types are associated with this period of development?

## CHAPTER IV: Pacific Grove Comes of Age page 170:

Read general information about the characteristics of residential properties from the "Pacific Grove Comes of Age" period (1903-1926)

4. Does the subject property have the character-defining features of an architectural style?

2. Tudor Revival Style (1925) - PHSA

- Rectangular massing with asymmetrical facades
- Shallow eaves
- Combination of side and front-facing gables
- Shallow eaves or overhangs
- Shingle siding, smooth or textured
- Shallow eaves or overhangs as within gable front elements
- Rustic and masonry accents around doors and windows
- Vertical art vents in the gable end, chimney, or other top
- Exterior chimney on the side

**Page 177:**  
Look at the photos and bullets to decide whether or not the subject property is a good example.

If it does appear to be a good example, the property may be significant for its architecture; proceed to Step 5 to learn more. If not, still proceed to Step 5, as the building may be significant for an association with events or people.

5. Is the property significant (events, trends, people, or architecture)?

National Register	PG Significance	Significance	Description
A-1	A, B	Events, Patterns, & Trends	Residential buildings from this period may be significant for their association with the theme of residential development tied to a key period of city expansion. For example, residences in early twentieth century subdivisions such as the Hillcrest Tract or University Park may reflect the expansion of the city during the early 1900s (see below).  Groups of residences may be better able to convey these patterns than individual structures; evaluators should consider the presence of historic districts that may be able to qualify individually for their architectural merit or associations with prominent individuals (see below).

**Pages 177-178:**  
Review the significance matrix to help evaluate whether or not the subject property meets the national, state, or local significance criteria

6. Does the property retain integrity?

- Minimum Eligibility Requirements:**
- Clear example of residential architecture from this period (simple bungalow or larger)
  - Retains original form and profile
  - Substantially retains the original pattern of window and doors
  - Retains some of its original ornamentation. (The retention of entry, window and/or roofline ornamentation is not required, but retention of original ornamentation is acceptable as long as they conform to the original floor, window pattern and the size of the openings)
  - Retention of the original cladding is important, but not absolute (see below)

- Other Eligibility Considerations:**
- It is apparent that houses continued to be moved during this period, and so integrity of location should not be considered a permanent concern
  - However, replacement of windows and doors to have been replaced, as these are subject to greater deterioration from weathering and use—particularly in a seaside setting. However, replacement patches should substantially conform to the original configuration. Incompletely patch replacement would likely preclude a residence's eligibility
  - Rear additions that have respected the scale of the original building are generally acceptable. However, additions that compromise a building's form and scale are not acceptable.
  - The replacement of the original cladding—most frequently stucco or asbestos siding over shingles—is acceptable, but the original character-defining features are retained. The replacement of original cladding would also likely preclude a residence's eligibility (or the National Register).
  - The retention of original windows greatly affects the integrity of a building, and therefore window replacement was common during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, the fact that a building does not retain its original windows should not—in and of itself—be viewed as an obstacle to listing. However, the replacement of windows and doors should be based on the original pattern of the National Park Service notes that "a property that has lost some historic materials or

**Page 179:**  
Decide whether or not the property meets the "Minimum Eligibility Requirements," and review "Other Integrity Considerations"

7. Is the subject property a qualified historic resource?

<b>YES</b>	The information in the Pacific Grove HCS will support and inform this decision.
<b>NO</b>	The information in the Pacific Grove HCS will support and inform this decision.

## PROPERTY EVALUATION CASE STUDY

The Pacific Grove HCS can help decision-makers, city staff, property owners, real estate agents, architects, and members of the community understand whether or not a particular property qualifies as a significant historic resource. The HCS does not evaluate individual properties, but rather provides the tools with which to make decisions about significance and integrity on a case-by-case basis.

The Pacific Grove HCS does not replace the City's current Historic Assessment process, which is required in order to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Instead, the HCS will provide useful information to aid in the preparation of Phase I Historic Assessments by qualified consultants, potentially reducing the time and cost involved. The HCS will also be very helpful to the Historic Resources Committee, and should be used as a reference point when questions arise concerning the significance or integrity of individual properties.

Take the following example of a Tudor Revival style residence constructed in 1925:



The flow chart at the left helps illustrate how one might use the Pacific Grove HCS to help evaluate its significance.

Whether or not the subject property is found to be a qualified historic resource, the information in the Pacific Grove HCS will support and inform the decision.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is a Historic Context Statement (HCS)?**

An HCS is a specialized historic study. It focuses on the physical development of a city—how and why it developed, what types of properties characterized that development, and whether or not they may be historically significant. An HCS identifies significant themes, patterns and property types, so that interested parties can recognize the forces that shaped the built environment over time. This provides a framework that helps for the identification, evaluation, and treatment of historic resources.

### **What is not included in an HCS?**

A context statement is a summary or synthesis of a city's physical history. It is not intended to be a comprehensive community history or chronology, nor does it evaluate the significance or eligibility of individual properties.

### **Who uses the HCS?**

The HCS may be used by anyone! It is intended to help decision-making bodies, City staff, architects, building owners, residents, and other interested members of the community recognize and plan for historic resources in Pacific Grove.

### **Can the HCS tell me when my property was built?**

Generally speaking, the HCS does not provide specific construction dates. However, it can help you focus on the period when your property was constructed. By reading about the property types and architectural styles that are associated with each period of development, you should be able to make an educated guess about when your property was built.

### **Where can I learn more about the history of my property?**

For those interested in learning more about Pacific Grove's history, we suggest visiting the Pacific Grove Heritage Society, Pacific Grove Public Library, Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History, Monterey Public Library (California Room), and California Historical Society. Primary sources you may want to reference include Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, newspaper articles, city directories, census data, and historic photographs. Secondary sources include books and publications, GIS maps, previous historical reports and survey documentation, and internet sources. Local historian Donald Howard provides exceptionally detailed accounts of Pacific Grove's early development in his book, *The Old Pacific Grove Retreat 1875 – 1940*, which should be considered a primary reference for research on Pacific Grove.

### **What are Sanborn maps, discussed often in the HCS?**

The Sanborn Map Company was founded in 1867 by Daniel Alfred Sanborn, a surveyor from Massachusetts. These richly detailed maps—showing building footprints, construction materials, and land uses—were originally created to help insurance companies estimate fire insurance liability. Sanborn Maps were produced for thousands of urbanized areas across the country, and were updated regularly until the 1950s. Today, the maps are publicly available in a variety of physical and digital formats, and are an essential tool for all historians.

### **Why does the historical information end in the 1960s?**

Generally speaking, properties must be at least 50 years old before they can be listed in a historic register, and thus the HCS concentrates on the city's history until the late 1960s. However, a few events and persons from the recent past were briefly mentioned to extend the life of the document, and ensure that it remains useful in the future.

### **A photo of my property appears in the HCS. Does this mean it is historically significant?**

Not necessarily. The photos in the HCS are intended to support the text descriptions, or to provide examples of property types. However, just because a photo of a building appears in the HCS does not automatically mean that the property is historically significant.

**Will the HCS place restrictions on my property?**

No. The HCS is an informational document that integrates with existing plans and policies. It is designed to help building owners, planners, and other interested parties evaluate the potential historic significance of a property, but does not directly result in official designations, development restrictions, or other limitations. The California Environmental Quality Act and the Pacific Grove Historic Preservation Ordinance (PG Municipal Code Chapter 23.76) are the regulatory documents that guide the treatment of historic resources in Pacific Grove.

**Will the HCS affect my property tax?**

No. The HCS is an informational document and will not be used for tax assessment purposes. It is also worth noting that concern about negative economic effects is often raised when discussing historic preservation. However, many studies have shown a direct correlation between the creation of historic preservation programs and policies and a long-term increase in property values.

**Does the HCS replace the current Historic Assessment Process?**

No. The City's current Historic Assessment process is required in order to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The HCS will provide useful information to aid in the preparation of Phase 1 Historic Assessments by qualified consultants, potentially reducing the time and cost involved. The HCS will also be very helpful to the City's Historic Resources Committee, and should be used as a reference point when questions arise concerning the significance or integrity of individual properties.

**Where can I find the HCS?**

Electronic copies are available at:

[www.ci.pg.ca.us/cdd](http://www.ci.pg.ca.us/cdd)

Reference copies are available at:

**Pacific Grove Library**  
550 Central Avenue

and

**Heritage Society Barn**  
605 Laurel Avenue

Hard copies may be purchased at:

**Pacific Grove Community Development Department**  
City Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 300 Forest Avenue

**For more information on the Historic Context Statement and accompanying Preservation Program Considerations, please contact a planner in the Pacific Grove Community Development Department, at (831)648-3190.**